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ABSTRACT

The topics and issues brought forth in this report are the result of a 3-month training course on early childhood education that included lectures, discussions, and field visits. Nineteen participants representing 11 countries lived together for 3 months during 1982, exchanging views and ideas. A list of program participants, staff, and sponsors is provided along with pertinent demographic information. Section 1 presents the program of studies, which focused on the individual in the process of growth and change, child psychology, curriculum development, pedagogy, health and nutrition education, creative drama, science teaching, handicrafts, community development, parental involvement, group dynamics, and supervision. Section 2 describes visitations to several special education institutes. The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters is discussed in section 3. Section 4 describes experiences at rural cooperative communities, on sightseeing trips, and at social events. Section 5 explains activities and offers discussions relevant to participants' return to their own communities. The project topics and lecturers are mentioned, and an explanation of World Food Day-1982 is also provided. (BJD)

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REPORT

COURSE ON

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

22 September - 22 December, 1982

PS 014192

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The MCTC staff gratefully acknowledges the cooperation extended to this course by educational and other institutions, government departments, local and regional councils, agricultural settlements, and organizations and individuals that offered their time, expertise and hospitality to the participants.

SPONSORS:

Israel Association for International Cooperation

Swedish-Haifa Committee

International Technical Assistance Department of the Netherlands

THE PARTICIPANTS AND MCTC STAFF

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the individual in process of growth and change; child psychology; curriculum development; pedagogy; health and nutrition education; creative drama; science teaching; handicrafts; community development; involvement of parents; group dynamics; supervision;

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

BHUTAN	Mr. Minchha WANGDI Asst. Teacher, Teachers Training Centre and Demonstration School, Paro
DOMINICA	Mrs. Eulalie BURTON Asst. Teacher, primary school, Education Division
INDIA	Miss Kamal DESHPANDE Superior of primary school - girls' section Children's Aid Society, Bombay
"	Mrs. Lata SHINDE Montessori Teacher, Children's Aid Society, Bombay
JAMAICA	Mrs. Enid JONES Superintendent, Residential Child Care Centre
"	Mrs. Lorna LARMAN Supervisor, day care centres Ministry of Youth and Community Development
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"	Mrs. Julia MACHELI Asst. Teacher, Roman Catholic Church Services
MALAWI	Miss Maureen Joy CHIKHOBWE District Social Welfare Officer Supervisor, Preschool Playgroups, Dept. of Community Services
NEPAL	Mr. Bhaba BHABAKUMAR K.C. Supervisor, primary schools, Ministry of Education
"	Mrs. Rana KUNTI Teacher, Preschool Organizer, Nepal Children's Organization
"	Mr. Hitnarayan Lal DAS Teacher and Administrator Nepal Children's Organization

PHILIPPINES	Mrs. Ligaya ORCINO Kindergarten Teacher, Division of City Schools
"	Mrs. Teresita ZULAYBAR Kindergarten Teacher, Division of City Schools
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SINGAPORE	Miss Leela PADMAN Kindergarten Teacher, Nazareth Centre Preschool
"	Mrs. Hock Bee NG Principal of Child Care Section, Presbyterian Welfare Services
"	Mrs. Jenny TAN Kindergarten Supervisor, National Trade Union, Child Care Administration
SWAZILAND	Mrs. Eunice Sibongile DLAMINI Headmistress, Primary School, Ministry of Education

THE PARTICIPANTS

(Analysis)

Number of Participants

16 women

3 men

Countries

Bhutan	1
Dominica	1
India	2
Jamaica	2
Lesotho	2
Malawi	1
Nepal	3
Philippines	2
Sierra Leone	1
Singapore	3
Swaziland	1

Occupation

Principal	1
Superintendent	2
Supervisor	5
Headmistress	1
Teacher	6
Asst. Teacher	4

Educational Qualifications

Professional & vocational training in the fields of education	8
Academic	9
Secondary school	2

Age

20 - 30 years	3
31 - 40 "	13
41 - 50 "	3

F O R E W O R D

An increasing interest in preschool education is now evident in many countries that previously considered it a "luxury". Those that have established kindergartens may wish to improve or extend the network, those that have no preschool framework may be planning to start. In both instances there is need for knowledgeable teachers trained for that field.

From the beginning of its establishment the Mount Carmel International Training Centre has responded to this need, to a modest extent, through its courses on Early Childhood Education.

The planners of study programmes, drawing on the extensive experience that Israel has to offer in this field, consider the conditions in the countries from which the students come, the constraints and demands to which they may be subjected as teachers of young children, and the special composition of the student groups.

Complementary to the classroom curriculum were the weekly observation visits to kindergartens during the course. Study visits were also made to services related to the early development of the child, that are integrated with the educational system.

An important aspect of the course was the heterogeneous, international character of the student body with divergent ethnic, religious, cultural and economic backgrounds and professional duties.

The fact of their living together at MCTC, the challenge of the lectures, discussions and field visits, afforded the participants opportunities for a broad exchange of views and ideas, and emergence of new insights. Eventually, each would decide what innovations were desirable, or applicable, in the context of the situations in her/his own country

PROGRAMME OF STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

In the planning of the curriculum of this course the questions were: what guidance can be given to the teachers of the young children? What is the essential knowledge that those teachers must acquire to enable them to foster a child's healthy development, broaden his comprehension, encourage his creativity and ability to think for himself?

Since obviously each subject was presented from the point of view of the individual lecturer, the fact that certain aspects reappeared in several other contexts clarified the ideas and reinforced the impact on the students. For example "the individual" was viewed in the light of social change, and again from the psychological-physiological and developmental points of view, or in the role of leadership.

This procedure was reflected in the comprehensive lecture series on "The Individual in the Process of Growth and Change" that was presented throughout the course, and revealed the interrelationship of all the subjects studied.

Sections of the summary of this series are incorporated here:

The Individual in the Process of Growth and Change

The aim of these lectures and discussions was to deepen the understanding of the processes of growth and change, to enable the preschool educator to better understand herself, the children and parents she deals with, and the changing world around her.

We began by discussing human development as a bio-psychological process as well as a socio-psychological one, touching on the interrelationship between man and his environment, on the influences of nature (heredity) and nurture (education) on human growth, and on sociological aspects of change.

"The accelerated social changes we all witness stem from developments in technology, economics, policies and communication, and are interrelated. Some changes are planned, others are directed, but the effects of many of them on human beings are unplanned.

"The influence of social change on the family was seen in the emergence of greater numbers of nuclear family units and the decline of the traditional extended family. It was stressed however, that family networks were still strong in most societies, and very important for the informal education and socialization of our children."

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The class analyzed the needs and tasks of the individual in each stage of the life cycle, enumerating the problems that arose from accelerated social changes, and from raised expectations of a better way of life for all.

"Was there a 'best' way of meeting needs at a certain stage in the life cycle? For instance, was it better for mothers of young children to look after them at home, or go out to work? Was it best for older people to live with their children, or on their own, or in old age homes? There seemed to be no clear-cut universal answers, and it was thought that much depended on cultural and socio-economic factors, and the way people felt about it. However, it was important that responsibility for the welfare of those who were too young, too old, or disabled to look after themselves, should be assumed by society, especially when, because of rapid social changes, no family support could be expected."

The lecture series concluded with discussion of the role of the preschool educator as a 'facilitator of change'. Many said that the educator should try to understand the dynamics of growth and change. She should respect people's resistance to new ways and yet consider how to try to change this attitude if it affected children adversely (such as discipline that was too harsh, poor nutrition, etc.). "Preaching or shaming did not really change attitudes but example, and forming good human relationships, might. Lasting positive changes could occur if educators and parents listened to each other and worked together."

Child Psychology

The objective that was set for this study was:

> to explore, analyze and attempt to understand the development of children, their world, and their relationships to the people who were important to them in their environment.

The curriculum covered the following areas:

1. Heredity and Environment
2. Behaviour Modification
3. Theories of Child Development
4. The Exceptional Child

Discussions also encompassed psychoanalysis, the philosophies of Erikson and Piaget, theories of the behavioural school of psychology and understanding the exceptional child.

The participants studied the universal schedule of the development of the child; dysfunction due to psychological, physical or social-cultural factors, and were advised on how to detect the signals and symptoms of a child in need of special attention or diagnosis.

An exceptional interest was shown in the subject of child behaviour - how to help children overcome maladjustment, and how to create an atmosphere in the kindergarten that would reinforce the child's healthy development. This prompted the students to relate specific problems from their own experience, and for further discussion.

Early in the course, when the regular weekly observation visits to local kindergartens began, each participant selected one child who would remain her subject for study of behaviour to the end of the visits. This personalised and intensified the observation.

In addition to these routine visits the group was received in special therapeutic classes in Haifa and its vicinity, by the Oum School for Handicapped Children, and by the Micha Institute for Deaf Children. A small group of participants who had expressed their interest in the subject of integration of diversified groups, observed a special programme in an ordinary kindergarten which integrated children who were being given special education.

Curriculum Development and the Three R's

During the first sessions on curriculum development the theories of Piaget, Dewey and Montessori were studied in detail; in the second phase participants practised the application of theory to actual planning of curricula for kindergartens, and to methods of teaching the three R's.

The child's motivation, orientation, readiness and reality were the operative factors in the structure of the curriculum. They were examined from both the Behaviourist and Humanist points of view, with consideration of the specific environments and types of communities for which the programmes were being planned.

Recognition of the value of this subject was found in the evaluation comments of some of the participants, such as: "the importance of step by step planning has become very clear"; "I understood for the first time the danger of giving formal teaching before the child is ready"; and "it was good to learn that the teacher is not a slave to a syllabus".

Pedagogy

This section, consisting of lectures and observation of kindergarten practice dealt with several aspects of kindergarten life: music, and singing with children; working with blocks; the significance of stories and story telling for the young child; how the developmental process is revealed in children's art, and types of didactic games - how to play them, how to present them.

Observation in kindergartens where these activities were being practised introduced new possibilities to the participants. They paid special attention to the physical arrangements and simple equipment, reflecting each teacher's personal choice, and both heard about and witnessed parent involvement and activity.

Attention was drawn to the fact that much of the equipment and most of the didactic aids were made by the teachers themselves, and in this the parents could also be involved, by being asked to help.

The observation visits concluded with a Hannuka (Festival of Lights) party in a kindergarten, which was an occasion not only to enjoy the festivities but to see how didactic use was made of a traditional holiday.

The participants were also able to draw comparisons by observation of different types of institutions, such as Children's Homes, elementary schools, day care centres and the Oranim demonstration kindergarten, attached to the Teacher Training College, which operates on the principle of 'constant flow' of activities.

Health and Nutrition Education

The kindergarten teacher is responsible for the well-being of the children in her class, and by virtue of her teaching becomes one of the community's agents of change. For these roles she must broaden her knowledge in the fields of health and applied nutrition, both for daily practical purposes and to pass on to parents, through the children.

In this subject the topics discussed in class were: public health; preventive and curative services; immunisation; modes of communication of infectious diseases and their symptoms; the importance of well-balanced diets and the causes and consequences of malnutrition. Some of the lectures were accompanied by slides.

In addition to the material in the reference library the students received publications of UNICEF; the World Health Organization (Chronicle, World Health, appropriate Technology for Health); the FAO (Health Nutrition in Tropical Africa; and Visual Aids in Nutrition Education). Besides the wealth of information on their own countries, these publications advised them of U.N. Organizations that would provide them with reading material, and teaching aids (film strips, slides).

Visits were arranged for the class to the following places:

. Curative Health Centres of Kupat Holim (Sick Fund run by the General Federation of Labour)

. The Family Health Centre of the Ministry of Health including care of the pregnant woman, the Under-Five Clinic, and facilities for children of school age (6 to 18 years). The participants saw the play section where mothers learn how to play with their children (interaction, stimulation) with the guidance of specialised persons.

. Two social workers told the group how they continued this technique in the community, explaining the role of the mother as the main educator of the young children.

. A pediatric department in a hospital - this visit was mainly to meet with teachers who were in charge of education for the hospitalised child, and who showed the arrangements they made to keep the children studying and active.

Creative Drama

Creative drama is a modern educational tool. The child is seen in his totality, equipped with his personal resources: the five senses, concentration, imagination, memory, feeling, speech, movement and intellect. The practise of creative drama focusses on strengthening and developing these resources.

The subject was presented through several workshops during which the group explored its theoretical basis and experienced, by active participation, the games and techniques that can be used in teaching and motivating children.

Drama offers techniques which arouses joy in learning, pleasure in creating and a sense of "self". The child takes part in games which encourage freedom of emotional expression, games in which he plays out his wishes and needs; he is led to learn through his senses, to create personal meaning for people and objects in his environment. The participants learned games for strengthening and developing his sensory capacities, for stimulating the child's imagination, and found in the use of stories a means to develop verbal expression and communication.

In the classroom they practised group work to help children become part of social groups and enacted simulation situations from their own experiences, to learn how to deal with them.

In addition to acquiring ideas that were immediately applicable for kindergarten work, the students had opportunities to also express themselves, to "let go" and create.

Science Teaching

"The teaching of science in the kindergarten aims at teaching a mode of inquiry, to help children understand the basic process of science and how knowledge is verified.... It strives to guide the child in his early interactions with the world around him, and with himself".

In this course, the subject was approached pragmatically through workshops in which the participants practised by means of assigned experiments, and also themselves planned and presented in class programmes of sensory activities for the kindergarten.

Concept formation was discussed in the workshops, with exercises to illustrate what is big, what is small, light and heavy, hard and soft, fast and slow, etc. - comparing the fluctuations in attributes of the same object under different conditions.

Skills were exercised to enhance the senses, to identify and to categorise materials, to observe natural phenomena, e.g. what sinks in water, what floats, etc.

Classification was viewed as a means for learning in a scientific way, and to recognize that an organic or inorganic object could fit into a variety of

The culmination of this study was a visit to the Matal* Unit at the University of Tel Aviv. Dr. Dina Stachel explained the programme of the elementary science teaching project, and also showed slides to enable the group to see the programme in action in kindergartens. She also pointed out the materials easily found in the children's environment, and showed the didactic games created by the department.

Excerpts from the participants' comments on the Matal programme

"The project of science research is clearly to close the gap between each stage in education."

"Children are taught in really simple terms which suit their level, collecting items from their homes... I have really seen that it does not take a laboratory to teach science to all age groups."

"Understanding basic processes of science guide the child in his early years to interact with the world around him."

"Through Matal games a child can learn to think... it gives him a chance to learn and understand in a natural, fun way."

"It makes me aware of how much more we can use materials found in the home and school to give children rich experiences and make learning meaningful."

"I was thrilled by this programme, as we face a similar problem at home. ... it introduces a continuity of subjects from kindergarten to primary, from primary to secondary and from High School to University."

"It explained how children's minds should be tested and sharpened - and why child psychology is necessary for preschool educators."

*Kindergarten Science Teacher Programme

"The programme is planned so as to arouse interest and develop the child in all aspects."

"Some of things I've seen are being done in my kindergarten but I can still improve on it from what I've seen on the slides, and there are some activities I can adapt."

"I think that through this method of doing and experiencing the children will have a better understanding and a sound knowledge of what they learn."

Handicrafts

The participants, even those who were skillful in craftsmanship, studied this subject not only to know 'how to make', but to develop their resourcefulness and imagination in fashioning inexpensive toys and games specifically for the kindergarten, which would be helpful in teaching very young children.

Scrap and waste materials (cloth, yarn, paper, cardboard, old plastic and tin containers, etc.) were used, and various techniques of the art were practised to make cloth dolls, animals, puppets and simple learning-games. They compared techniques for creative expression and experimentation with paper and colours.

A workshop of the Municipal Pedagogic Centre gave the participants new ideas and incentive to create their own games for teaching purposes, and many helpful hints on how it could be done.

Towards the end of the course the participants set up a colourful exhibition of their handiwork, the dolls, puppets and animals they had made and the didactic games, which would playfully educate little children. The exhibits were on view for the staff, lecturers, and the participants of the visiting groups of Hippy Workshops.

Community Development

The subject of Community Development is always included in the curriculum of the preschool education courses, to develop in the participants an awareness of the need to know the community in which they function. By learning what services are available, which people can be of assistance, and in what ways parents and the community generally can be motivated to support early childhood education, the kindergarten teacher will be able to work better and better understand the problems she will encounter, at all levels.

The first assignment in this study was an exercise in observation and enquiry. The newly arrived group was asked to survey the vicinity of the Mount Carmel Centre and to report to the class on the physical surroundings, the services in the area, and what residents thought about their neighbourhood. The last part was not simple, since there was a language difficulty, and sometimes a puzzled reserve on the part of the interviewees.

"How to evaluate your community" was the question examined on needs-assessment. What advantages, what disadvantages are found in your community? How can information on those two aspects help you in your work?

A related written assignment was for each participant to describe a problem in her/his community and the techniques of problem analysis and solving that were used.

In this context a field visit was made to Neveh David - a nearby suburban community - to assess its advantages and problems.

The final section was devoted to the role of the kindergarten teachers in the community, what leadership role they played in a parent-teacher discussion, in a committee meeting, or as

coordinator. Throughout the study, lectures and discussions were supplemented and made realistic by role-play case studies and simulation games.

Involvement of Parents

KEDMA - a preschool programme for parent-teacher group discussion, has proved itself as a means of giving women confidence in themselves as parents, and as individuals. Kindergarten teachers are trained to conduct group discussions through which they learn, informally, about the homes and cultural background of the children.

The course participants attended such a session, following the proceedings by means of simultaneous translation. They were intensely interested and impressed by the facts that there were fathers present also; that the speakers were amazingly open and frank; that the discussion was conducted in an atmosphere of good humour (attesting to friendly teacher-parent relationship); that they, themselves could identify with the Israeli parents who seemed to have the same problems with their children, the same demands and expectations (the desire to change the child's behaviour, to make him understand what was right and what was wrong), as the parents in their own communities had.

They were particularly interested in the discussion on punishment - was it the right thing for parents or teachers to do, was it effective, did it harm the child?

After returning to the Centre, the students spent hours recalling details and arguments and comparing their impressions.

Group Dynamics

Group dynamics is studied to enable the participants to gain an understanding of group action and interaction, and insight into the application of that knowledge to their work. The main emphasis was on the practical application of the study material to the students' own home reality and working conditions.

The topics were:

Definitions of groups and various types of groups.

The importance of group life for the individual and for society.

. The individual member in the group - control and pressure, conformity and group norms.

. How to form a group, how to plan a first meeting.

. Communication within and between groups.

Social structure in groups - the sociogram - emphasis was placed on the children as a group in the class.

. Conflict and decision-making as group processes.

. Leadership: formal and informal; use of limits or discipline

. The use of the group to bring about change. Intervention techniques, buzz groups, discussion groups, committees.

. Practical emphasis on working with parents groups - some of the problems and how to attempt to deal with them.

The lectures were illustrated by case studies, most of which were based on the participants' own experience. Communication within the groups was stressed as well as conflicts that teachers were likely to encounter in their work.

Audio-visual materials, films and records were also used, and role-play, to ensure maximum participation of the students.

Group dynamics was a subject with which all the participants identified without reservations. They described it as "realistic", "effective", "applicable to all situations", "a key to solutions of many problems". The exercises they had practised were "most enjoyable" and would be helpful in situations vis-a-vis pupils' parents groups, colleagues, and voluntary organizations. In fact, the lecturer had used the course itself to illustrate the various principles and aspects of group dynamics.

Supervision

Inspection, guidance and counselling - the tasks of the supervisor - demand understanding, sensitivity and tact. The supervisor has often to deal with conflicts that arise from inter-role differences, and to solve problems from different points of view: for instance the number of children to be registered in a kindergarten as seen by the teacher, the parents, the local authority, and from her own pedagogical approach.

The class discussed the duties of the supervisor in detail:

- preparation and approval of premises for opening a kindergarten
- preparation of teachers and their placement according to seniority or ability
- supervision visits in the kindergarten and meetings with teachers
- in-service training and renewal challenges for teachers

Although the most commonly requested inspection duties were matters of administrative regulations, the supervisor's guidance and counselling were found to be most effective in helping to change attitudes, since these stem from inner understanding (and acceptance) rather than from directives imposed by established authority.

Special focus was placed on the supervisor's need to see each teacher as a person with her own ideas, feelings and needs. It was found that only in this way can a supervisor establish a relationship that will help teachers accept constructive criticism, or prompt them to call for professional guidance when needed.

The subject was presented by two supervisors, each one emphasizing a different aspect. In addition, the group benefitted from the visit of Prof. Milly Almy, emeritus of Berkeley University, California, who discussed a few of the situations encountered by the students, and quoted from her own experiences an educator.

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Special Education

The subject of special education was studied during the last month spent at MCTC. The lecturer defined 'exceptional' children as those who deviate from the average in physical, mental, emotional or social characteristics to such an extent that they need special help in order to adjust and to develop to their maximum capacity. This is true of the very gifted child, as well as one suffering some disability.

Specialisation in this field is increasingly in demand. It has become widely recognised that every child, whatever his capabilities, has a right to education. Thus to complete their observations of the Israeli educational system, the course visited the following institutes:

a) The Child Development Clinic of the Ministry of Health, where children with special problems are examined and diagnosed. Later the participants visited different remedial, therapeutic kindergartens in less developed areas, accompanied by a staff member who provided on-the-spot explanations.

b) A School for the Handicapped. Prior to the visit a general lecture on the subject of Special Education was given at MCTC by Mr. I. Genigar, Headmaster of the Oum school. The next day the group was shown the facilities, equipment and activities under the guidance of the head-master who presided over the question answer session that followed.

Mr. Genigar told the participants that the school considered the development of self-reliance of the pupils of paramount importance, and thus had a very strict demand for punctuality, cleanliness, neatness, and high quality of craftwork

that they did. This insistence, he said, indeed greatly benefitted the pupils and the habits remained with them after they were on their own.

c) An Institute for Children Suffering from Cerebral Palsy. There, special emphasis is placed on art and craftwork, in order to help the children reach maximum muscular control. The group found it fascinating to see the mechanical aids and tools the children use to help them communicate, and to learn skills such as reading, writing, and physical control.

d) A Club for the Handicapped. In contrast to the formal educational facilities observed earlier, this club provides an informal and social meeting place for handicapped youngsters. Above the club is a hostel where some of the young people live, and are able to carry on fairly independent lives.

e) The Micha Institute for Deaf Children. On this visit the participants realised how difficult it is for a hearing person to begin to imagine the problems with which deaf persons are confronted in their daily life. It is even more difficult to grasp the enormous developmental handicaps which deafness imposes upon an otherwise normal child. Before the group entered the classrooms, they heard a short talk in which these problems, and the various methods of dealing with them, were outlined.

At Micha the classes were watched through one-way mirrors, and the participants saw the children learning basic communication methods without disturbing the lesson.

These observation visits convinced the participants that a kindergarten teacher must be on the alert to detect any disability, or deviation in behaviour, so that treatment will be given at the earliest possible stage.

Playground for the Special Child

On Mount Carmel, not far from MCTC, there is a large and very pleasant park called Gan Ha'em (Mother's Garden), which has a section with the facilities of an ordinary playground for children. But there is also an additional playground for handicapped children which the course visited for observation, with different and specially designed play equipment for various disabilities, that demand greater effort and help to develop the muscular system. Disabled children from all over Haifa are brought in turn, at intervals, for supervised outdoor and indoor play. For the latter there is a one-room house with kitchen facilities where the children enjoy cooking and other household chores.

Oranim Teacher Training College

In addition to the field visits described in the preceding text, the participants spent several hours at the Oranim Teacher Training College (at Tivon, near Haifa), a College mainly for teachers from kibbutzim. It is also a testing ground for innovation and research projects, such as the model kindergarten in its Centre for Child Studies, where the course was shown an interesting project. Five different groups of kindergarten children were brought there once a week for an extended period. They came from a development town, a kibbutz, a Beduin encampment, a Jewish urban neighbourhood, a Christian Arab city. They are all placed in one kindergarten class and take part in activities at their own pace, while the teacher-students observe their activities reactions and interaction. What was very fascinating and revealing was the similar pattern of behaviour that emerges regardless of the children's backgrounds, language, culture or home surroundings.

Training School for Child Minders

Half a day was spent at this training school for adolescent girls and young women which prepares them for taking care of very young children. Its three-year comprehensive course is of secondary school level and its teachers are specialised in early childhood education. The trainees were described by the principal as "not yet drop-outs from the professions, not yet in charge of families". On the whole, they were drifters who came from disadvantaged homes or neighbourhoods. To be accepted "they must be warm, responsive persons, able to relate to children."

The school serves a dual purpose: it offers a vocation to persons who might otherwise be lost in society, and supplies trained para-professional personnel for early child care that is in great demand in all communities.

The Institute of Biology

The director of the institute described its activities and its contribution to the educational system in Haifa. Pupils from the local schools come there for study sessions with their teachers, enjoy the opportunity to closely observe live animals, and learn to overcome "folkloristic" prejudices and fears.

The institute also provides in-service courses for teachers, as well as continuous professional guidance, and didactic games which give the children closer contact with nature, and can be prepared on the spot. For some of the participants it was their first encounter with many of the species exhibited. It was interesting for all to see how animals that are very common and available can be utilized for educational purposes such as learning about the environment, classification, etc.

The Home Instruction Program

In the final phase of the course, (December 6-20), the MCTC was the venue of an international workshop on the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), organized by the School of Education of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Thirty educators attended, from Australia, Africa, Asia, Latin America, Canada and the U.S.A.

The Early Childhood Education course thus had the opportunity to become familiarized with the HIPPY methods and programme, and to enjoy an informal exchange with the international group of educators during the fortnight.

The home instruction programme, concentrating on poor areas, strives to strengthen the mother's position and make her the central figure in the education of her child. "While the kindergartens are very good, they cannot do the whole job... the children are home from 12 or 1 o'clock and during the rest of the day the family members have an impact on them as educators and socialising agents... we must then look and see what we can do in the home."

Series of game-like activities based on home materials, for mothers and child to do at home together, were created... "broken down into small, interesting and simple steps.'

The mother, usually only semi-literate, is guided and taught by trained para-professionals (usually other mothers in the neighbourhood), who visit her once a week to see how she is getting along, to advise, answer questions, bring new material.

The experiments in Israel began 14 years ago, and the programme has spread to many parts of the country. There has been a follow-up throughout the years and it is found that on the whole, the achievement of the HIPPY children not only kept pace with that of the conventionally taught, but has even exceeded it.

Rural Cooperative Communities

Besides the visits that related specifically to professional aspects of the course, the participants became acquainted with different types of rural settlements and of social structures. They were received at Kibbutz Maagan Michael, one of the collective agricultural settlements that are unique to Israel, based on equality of its members and on shared work responsibilities and benefits, in which the members have no private property or wages. The profits from their agriculture and industrial production benefit the whole community. The kibbutz also has its own views on bringing up their children according to its values, and these were explained to the participants.

The moshav (a cooperative agricultural village) was also a point of great interest. Observation of Moshav Kerem Maharal was an occasion for comparison of the two systems and for evaluation of the advantages of cooperative living.

Participants' comments on the kibbutz:

"It is like an independent country." "Every one gives something of his labour to the community." "A good way to prevent jealousy and competition." "A social achievement of a rather special kind." "Informality in the school."

"It is hard to understand how so many people can live, work, create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual assistance without any good salary."

"....impressed by the way people could be conditioned to live and work on basis of equal opportunity."

"Does the child later find it easy to adjust to the outside world?"

Sightseeing Trips

Excursions were organized to places of general historical and religious interest that included the ancient city of Acre, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, the Mount of Beatitudes, Tiberias and the Golan Heights.

Three days were spent in the Capital of Israel. To come to Jerusalem for the first time is for everyone, of whatever faith, a highly emotional and exciting experience. Its impact on the members of the course may be judged from the following excerpts:

"... Jerusalem is a city suspended between heaven and earth. It is a historical, religious and holy city."

"... and also, we visited the Dome of the Rock, David's Tower Tower, Via Dolorosa, Israel's Parliament, the National Museum, the University, and the many cultural and religious institutions."

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"...If I had not visited Jerusalem, where most of the Biblical events took place, my trip to Israel would not have been completed. I have myself stepped on the holy grounds."

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"The 3 days in Jerusalem are three very memorable days."

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"As a Buddhist, Jerusalem, though religiously heard about wide-over the world, does ıot impress me religiously, but historically it satisfies ny curiosity. The other places we saw, as the Knesset, Bethlehem, the Holocaust Memorial, Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives, enrich my general knowledge. The Museum attracted me, especially the youth section, which is related to my career.

"The visit cleared many doubts in my mind. At times we were made to believe that these holy places are in heaven, that you can only see them after death. The city as a whole is immaculately beautiful."

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My visit to Jerusalem has made the Christian religion more real and meaningful to me, for the city has something special which only the human heart can feel. For me, this opportunity will remain a life-long experience."

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Social Events

The Early Childhood Education course ran concurrently with a second one at the Centre. They formed a joint social committee to organise the celebration of festive occasions at MCTC and also for attending Israeli festivals occurred during the term. These included various outings and folklore evenings in which all the students took part, performing traditional dances and songs.

There were visits to museums, artistic performances and gatherings at MCTC with other students from abroad who were studying in various institutes in Israel.

On many occasions Israeli families invited students to their homes and friendships were formed.

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Re-entry is the process that awaits the students on their return to their community and their work. It entails renewing their connections, re-establishing their contacts, or developing new ones that will help to start new programmes. These could be, primarily, their own colleagues at work, their local community and organizations, fellow alumnae of MCTC or the Centre's faculty staff who were always prepared to send supplementary professional material.

The session was sober and introspective. The last classroom meeting had been held, their final assignments were ready for presentation. It was now time for a face to face encounter with the immediate future.

Projects

The final assigned work was the presentation of a project which the participants would propose for implementation in their communities, on their return. The conditions were that the project must relate to an actual need, to be feasible and adaptable.

The formal oral presentation of all the projects in class informed the participants about each other's plans and thus expanded their perspectives, arousing more ideas about what could be done in their field, and how.

In their elaboration of their plans some participants began with a brief history of their country or region, many described the special circumstances which had led each one to select the particular scheme, with the conviction that it would really benefit her/his community.

Most of the theses on which they had worked intermittently during the last part of the course included data, step by step action plans, consideration of the people who could be recruited to help, sequence scheduling, budgets needed and possible sources of financing.

In their evaluations of the subjects, some participants said that their work on the assignment had given them confidence, motivation and determination to carry out the plan. "It will be helpful to share ideas with the community at home."

"It was a good way to clarify ideas, and to summarise the visits to the kindergartens."

"It gave me a sense of purpose."

Project Topics	Country	Participant
To Establish Workshop Discussions with Teachers (to improve teaching methods)	Bhutan	Mincha Wangdi
Modifying the Kindergarten Curriculum	Dominica	Eulalie Burton
Inclusion of Handcraft in Curricula for Girls aged 12 to 16	India	Kamal Deshpande
To Change Classroom Environment to help build Children's Personalities	India	Lata Shinde
In-Service Training Programme fo· Child Care	Jamaica	Enid Jones
Strengthening Staff in the Area of Stimulation	Jamaica	Lorna Larman
To Implement Preschool Education in the Bernadette Parish	Lesotho	Julia Macheli
Parents and Teacher Group Discus:ion (to create a link between home a id school)	Lesotho	Lydia Lesoli
A Three-week Training Course for Playground Leaders (pilo! projec:)	Malawi	Maureen J. Chikhobwe

Project Topics	Country	Participant
Establishing a Teachers' Centre (to improve the teaching process)	Nepal	Bhaba Bhabakumar K.C.
Parent-Teacher Meetings (to use the Kedma programme for mutual cooperation, and sharing interests)	Nepal	Rana Kunti
After School Activities (Child Welfare Programme)	Nepal	Hitnarayan Lal Das
A Remedial Programme for the Speech Impaired	Philippines	Ligaya Orcino
Enrichment Programme for Kindergarten Play Areas	Philippines	Teresita Zulaybar
On-the-Spot Training Programme for Teacher Aides	Sierra Leone	Hannah Coker
Special Classes for Slow Learners	Singapore	Hock Bee NG
To Introduce Activities for Curriculum Enrichment	Singapore	Leela Padman
To Form a Teacher's Discussion Group (Roles of Parents and Classroom Teachers)	Singapore	Jenny Tan
To Set Up a Teacher's Workshop in My School (learning by doing)	Swaziland	Eunice S. Dlamini

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LIST OF LECTURERS

SUBJECT	LECTURER
Child Psychology	Dr. Moshe BARSKY Clinical Psychologist
Curriculum Development	Mrs. Hannah PORAT Education Consultant
Community Development	Mrs. Hava MAIDENBAUM MCTC Staff
Group Dynamics	Mr. Zalman GORDON Social Worker
Health Education	Mrs. Dora AMELAN MCTC Staff
Science Teaching	Mr. Ezra OSTROVER Teacher Training College
Creative Drama	Mrs. Biela LEPKIN Drama Teacher
Handicrafts	Mrs. Batsheva DRIMMER Teacher, Arabic Teacher Seminary
Nutrition	Mrs. Sarah RUMNEY Lecturer, Neri Bloomfield Community College
Individual Growth and Change	Mrs. Liese NOHEL MCTC Staff
Principles of Pedagogy	Mrs. Elinor KOLUMBUS Education Consultant
Supervision	Mrs. Rina MICHALOVITCH Regional Supervisor, Ministry of Education

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GUEST LECTURERS

SUBJECT	LECTURER
Education in Israel Historical Background of Israel The Religions in Israel	Dr. Raphael WEINBERG Rabbi, Lecturer, Haifa University
Early Childhood Development	Mrs. Rina MICHALOVITCH Regional Supervisor, Ministry of Education
New Trends in Early Childhood Education	Dr. Nehama NIR-YANIV General Supervisor of Kindergartens, Ministry of Education
Training of Personnel	Mrs. Hava SCHWARTZ Principal, School for Educational and Remedial Vocations

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WORLD FOOD DAY - 1982

The marking of World Food Day at MCTC in October was a many-faceted event, focussing on the overwhelming prevalence prevalence of hunger in the world. Discussion of the means means to combat it, was conducted by specialists in food technology and agronomy.

The joint organizers of the programme and exhbitions were the staff and students of MCTC and the Extension Section of the Foreign Training Department, Israel Ministry of Agriculture.

Two exhibition halls displayed books on nutrition and agriculture, journals, leaflets and posters from numerous countries, with FAO information material prominent.

Also displayed were meals prepared by the students themselves, demonstrating inadequate diets that resulted in malnutrition and disease, but also showing how they could be corrected by the addition of certain inexpensive locally available staple foods.

Two films produced by the Israel Association for International Cooperation, were featured on improved farming methods in some Asian and Latin American countries. They showed the introduction of more modernised and efficient farming techniques that depended on the farmer and not necessarily on expensive machinery, and resulted in considerably increased crops.

At the end all the people present, including very many visitors, enjoyed the national dishes on which the students had worked with enthusiasm to prepare.

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